

Fresh Ricotta

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Ronda cites Michael Chiarello as one of her inspirations; in fact, his cookbook "At Home with Michael Chiarello" is the only one she keeps in her kitchen. She learned her method of making ricotta from him.

2 quarts whole milk
2 cups heavy cream
1 Tbsp. salt
2 cups filtered or bottled water
1/3 cup fresh-squeezed lemon juice
1 tsp. grated lemon zest

In a large pot, mix together the milk and cream. Dissolve the salt in the water and add it to the mixture.

Bring the mixture slowly to a boil, then quickly turn off the heat and add the lemon juice and zest. Curds will begin to form.

Allow the mixture to rest for a few minutes before gently scooping the curds out with a slotted spoon, putting them into a cheesecloth-lined colander. After the ricotta has drained for a few minutes, it is ready to eat.

You can serve it as is or layer it in a casserole with fresh herbs and grated Parmesan and bake it to create a warm, fragrant spread.